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ABSTRACT

Pragmalinguistics, combining knowledge of linguistics and civilization, is a field under development within the realm of applied linguistics. It is concerned with the pragmatism of speech acts, which calls for knowledge of the relation between one linguistic element and the persons producing, using, and receiving it during the communicative situation. Pragmalinguistics attempts to develop a systematic inventory of all that belongs to communicative competence. Communicative competence includes not only grammar but also the way of living and the view of life specific to the competent speaker, since he needs them to make use of his ability to perform speech acts. Foreign language instruction should include these dimensions, as well as instruction in casual speech and fast speech rules in second language learning, since the highly conventional style taught by high school teachers is inappropriate for the majority of conversations the student will have. (Author/VM)

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Saalbach II

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# PRAGMALINGUISTICS

This second symposium held in Saalbach by the Council of Europe is not - as the first was - concerned with linguistics. Nevertheless the organisers of this symposium deemed it necessary to establish a connecting link between the first highly successful symposium and the second one.

I shall talk about the relationship between linguistics and the civilisation and relia (C-R) lessons from the linguistic point of view. Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you that my way of treating the subject is a partial one, so to say the linguistic point of view which is necessarily onesided..

I shall maintain two main theses:

(1) In foreign language teaching a neat distinction between language teaching as such and C-R teaching is unnecessary and useless.

(2) Modern linguistics has developed a separate branch, pragmalinguistics, which can combine linguistics and C-R if being furth further developed witnin the field of applied linguistics.

Thirdly I shall treat an important but very much neglected special field in this context, on which part of my scientific activities are concentrated; fast speech rules. The main issue of discussion in all this will be to apply the new fields of research of general linguistics to foreign language teaching.

First I would like to define "pragmalinguistics".

Pragmalinguistics, a fairly recent field of research is concerned with the pragmatism of speech acts. Pragmatism is the relation between one linguistic element and the persons producing, using, and receiving it during the communicative situation. The

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English linguist John Firth distinguished between three meanings of the term "context of situation":

1. relation to human experience

2. setting (situation and speech)

3. purpose and scope

Especially the first point shows clearly the relation between pragmatism and C-R courses. However, the pragmatism of setting contains much more. Dieter Wunderlich mentions the following elements:

1. Characteristics of the transmitter of a message

2. Characertistics of the receiver of message:

Both points are relevant for C-R courses when the intention is to make pupils familiar with the characteristics of representatives of different nations.

3. The lapse of time necessary for transmitting the message

4. Place of transmission: this point is particularly important for C-R courses in the context of pragmalinguistics.

5. Preliminary knowledge and ability to receive and to transmit

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This is a special item where to my knowledge the C-R has failed. In the French courses the Austrian high school student learns something about French culture, history geography, and institutions. He shall acquire the necessary basic knowledge of the foreign country and the foreign people. He gets to know basic elements of what a Frenchman knows of France. In general the Austrian pupil hardly learns anything of what a Frenchman knows about Austria. In order to ensure successful communication, it is necessary that speaker A is fully aware what his conversation partner knows of himself what speaker B is expecting from him (what the others think about himself). An Austrian high school or university student ought to learn in the French C-R course what a Frenchman usually knows about Austria, what he expects of an Austrian. It is also useful to know something about the prevailing misunderstandings and prejudices. Successful communication reuqires all interlocutors to know something about tne partners' knowledge about each other. In consequence the lessons in C-R should partly be contrastive: the supposed capabilities of the communication partners are also important: usually an American does expect less of a foreigner who speaks English than a Frenchman does of a Frenchspeaking foreigner.

So far we have mentioned the five characteristics of pragmatism - transmitter, receiver, time and place of communication, preliminary knowledge and capability of the communication partners.

In addition to this the following points are worth mentioning. The relations between the social conditions of the transmitter and that of the receiver of message. The sociological problems of pragmalinguistics will be given special consideration later on. At this moment I should like to talk about a second problem of the

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communicative situation where to my knowledge the C-R lessons are insufficient. What are the social relations like between a foreigner, for instance a student of languages in a foreign country and a native speaker he is meeting there for the sake of communicative interaction. Of what social prestige does a traveller of country X in country Y dispose of? The C-R lesson apparently lays too much stress on the supposition that in the target country, England, for instance, there are only Englishmen which means that only the social relations and communicative interactions between Englishmen are to be treated. At the best, relations and interactions between Englishmen and Americans are treated in order to contrast the characteristics of the two Anglo-Saxon nations and to point out the differences between British and American English. If an Austrian high school student is to successfully handle the speech situation in England, he has to be informed also of social relations between foreigners and native speakers. This requires again contrastive lessons in C-R.
7. The speaker's and the receiver's intentions are essential elements of the speech situation. These elements of pragmatism should appear in two ways in foreign language teaching: First the pupil must know how to express certain communicative interactions in the foreign language. Too often the teaching of foreign languages seems to be concentrated on the following problem: "If you say XY in your mother tongue, how can you express it in the foreign language?" In my opinion the pragmatical problem is of equal importance.

"Wanting to do, or to achieve, or to express something in a given situation, what is one supposed to do or say as a foreigner in,

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say England?" The other problem when one is abroad is guessing the native interlocutor's intention. How should one get to know without being telepathic? This reveals at once a crucial lack in research and teaching. We know much too little about the typical non-verbal behaviour of the different language communities. Or rather, there are of course myths and prejudices about the mimicry and about the characteristic gestures of other nations, for instance the number of movements performed during speech by an Italian or an Englishman, the body movements a person uses to say "yes" and "no". But the scientific investigation into non-verbal communication has not gone very far yet. The following important problem - that of pragmatism, affords a slightly more optimistic view.

8. How are certain speech intentions expressed in a certain language? We may call to mind the old Theory of Functions established by the Viennese linguo-psychologist Bühler: communication, information, response release. Recent pragmalinguistics has followed other theories to be sure, especially those of the English philosopher J. Austin. The concept of illocutionary force is of special importance."Illoction is not what a person says but what he implies when he speaks. If, for example, a husband comes home and says to his wife "I'm hungry" the sentence he has uttered and its illocutionary function are not are not identical. For the hungry husband does not want, so much to inform his wife about the condition of his stomach as to implicitly call upon her to prepare something for him to eat.

Thus the illocutionary function of "I'm hungry" according to Bühler is not an information but a response releaser. So far

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pragmalinguists have tried to find the universals of illocutionary force expressions. Yet for foreign-language teaching the investigation into speech-specific ways of expression would be equally important.

In consideration of C-R however, another of Austin's categories which has been neglected, is significant, too, namely that of perlocutionary force. This is to designate the straightforwardness and successfulness of a certain expression in relation to the speech aim. Let us take up once more the example of the hungry husband coming home: What should he say to make his wife prepare something for him to eat as quickly and as safely as possible? In this regard, the expressions may well vary from language to language. And C-R lessons ought to point out the differences in habits and conventions between the target language and the mother language.

Politeness is a particularly important aspect. In German as well as in many other languages there is a difference between "müssen" (E. "must") and "dürfen" (E. "may"). "Müssen" expresses constraint and thus is less polite than "düufen". Yet at a party, the situation is quite different. When the host tells a guest "you must have a piece of this cake" she is politer than if she said "you may have a piece of this cake". In the latter case, she gives the impression of condescendance, treating her guest more or less like some subordinate or dependent person; besides, the host's behaviour in the situation presupposes that she considers her cake very good one and thus she openly voices that sort of self-appreciation which again is impolite; and finally she presupposes that the guest is longing for the cake, to be eager to take a piece

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- in doing so, she regards the guest as being impolite, which is an imputation in itself. This simple situation which Robin Lakoff has discussed reveals already how intricately the speech behaviour is embedded in a pragmatic net of rules for politeness (code of politeness). The sentences "You must take a piece of this cake" and "you may take a piece of this cake" have quite different value in respect of politeness when it is a mother that says them to her child. In that case the sentence using "dürfen" is more appropriate, for the child depends on the mother and is considered to be voracious. If the mother says "You must take ..." she imposes a disagreeable constraint upon the child, who obviously does not want to eat any cake, either because he does not like the taste or because he has already had enough. So here you see something extremely typical of pragmatism: even minor changes in speech situation may attribute a highly different value to one and the same sentence.

In this field, the differences between various European languages will not be very strong ones; there will be a difference maybe as to the decision whether to accept the offered cake, or to accept it at once, or to politely decline first, waiting for another offer to keep up appearances; maybe there will be a difference also as to the (question) which reveals whether an offer or a polite request is meant seriously at all (cp. Portuguese). This, for example is the first problem that demands co-operation between language training as such and C-R. Or think of the correct use of "du" and "Sie" and of their respective equivalents in the European languages, whose use often varies from language to language and which also varies according to the pragmatical and sociological context within one language. Pragmalinguistics provides the only possibility of combining linguistics and C-R in such a case. For

For pragamalinguistics attempts at a systematical inventory of all that belongs to communicative competence. This is the very point to make: Such communicative competence is much more than mere linguistic competence. It comprises not only the grammar but also the way of living and view of life specific to the competent speaker, inasmuch as he needs them to make use of his ability to perform speech acts. In other words foreign language teaching founded on a theory of pragamlinguistics cannot do without the C-R knowledge basic to speech communication being conveyed. What do these considerations mean for the status of C-R in the training of future teachers, and university and high school students?

Formerly, C-R was used as one linguistic basis of language training mainly under the two following aspects: (1) that of so-called "Völker psychologie" (ethnological psychology), which, however, has not acquired any other than very subjective and unstable ones; (2) that of the "Wörter and Sachen" (Words and Things"); the latter tried to explain the etymological connections between words by relating them to the realm of things. I shall not of course, enlarge upon the applicability of entymologies to foreign language teaching. In my opinion, etymologies are useful and may stimulate the student, although they do not play a central part.

C-R, however, should occupy a place in the centre. In the training of foreign language teachers in Austria for example it should be palced at one level with linguistics and literature.

Should it also become a separate subject at school? I do not think so. Considering the small number of lessons I think it is unfeasable to branch off from foreign language lessons in order to extend the history or geography lessons. Such a tendancy is difficult to avoid, though, if, as happens, pupils are required to read a book on US history: C-R lessons should not be history lessons where English is spoken. Yet a ministerial decree in Bavaria seems to follow just this trend, requiring the history and for language lessons be put in the charge of one teacher. Accordingly the Austrian "Matura" (school-leaving examination) comprises a separate question on C-R. What nonsensical actions C-R may perform when it grows too independent is illustrated by a practice we find at some schools teaching C-R as a sort of punishment; when a class behaves badly, a chapter on the English medieval kings is dictated to be written down in the C-R book! It is extremely questionable whether such a procedure makes language teaching and learning very interesting. Nor do I think English text books make much sense when they feature separate chapters enumerating characteristics of various regions of Great Britain.

To my mind the importance of C-R in the teaching of foreign languages is in providing a foundation for the linguistic and communicative competence. For as we have just seen in discussing pragmatism, communicative competence requires a knowledge of basic C-R facts. Therefore <u>C-R must be a function of the language</u>.

Thus C-R lessons ought to be specifically attuned to the

competence aimed at by a student. If for example a student of physics wants to learn just as much Russian as he needs to be able to read Russian books on physics C-R may be practically altogether disregarded. High school tries to work towards two kinds of communicative competence:

(1) the student will be able to listen to, understand and actively translate written and spoken texts.

(2) He will be able to adequately make himself understood in real speech situations.

From this follows, I think that C-R ought to form part of the acquisition of these two kinds of competence. The history and geography lessons about the target countries already provide a survey of their history and geography. You may add sociology, history of art, etc. The language lessons should increase receptive competence by means of texts that provide relevant linguistic as well as factual knowledge. The same is true of translating, copying from radio, tape or records and watching films or television.

As far as I know, there has been little attempt at founding the C-R lessons on real speech situations. For successful interactions to be guaranteed in such situations the student must be familiar with basic facts about the way of living and thinking of the target country. But how to teach them systematically is the problem. Up until now this has depended largely on how long the teacher himself has lived in the target country and on his ability to integrate his impressions and experiences into the lesson and convey them to the students. But how does one render such techniques objective and put them into action? One has to

insist here that it is uaually less important for the students to increase their competence in real speech situations, to know about lofty cultural achievements of the target country than to be familiar with trivialities and generalities of the life there.

In Austria for instance this demand so far seems to have been taken into consideration by teaching British weights and measures in extenso. As the use of the metric system in Britain becomes more extensive this passtime which some teachers have is destined to disappear. What is going to replace it and similar ones?

It could be one of the most fruitful tasks of this symposium to discuss the problem of how to teach the trivial habits and ways of thinking of the target country because this is, in fact, the premise for all communicative competence. Nobody will question what a high aim it is to give young people an insight into the culture of the target country. What is the use of shoving them the most beautiful photos and slides of the Loire castles if he cannot make himself understood when arriving at the railway station in Paris.

One method of teaching culture and civilisation is to make the pupils have dialogues with each other in the actual classroom situations. This, however, seems only to be successfully instituted in the 2nd and 3rd forms and, unfortunately it has not been applied to the 5th to 8th forms, whose pupils are the appropriate age for discussion, culture and civilisation. It would, therefore, be desirable to exercise the method with these age groups.

What has been said so far, corresponds with Prof. Stürzl's idea that culture and civilisation ought not to be taught to students of modern languages by historians, geographers, and sociologists but by philologists or linguists, unfortunately there are not enough pragmalinguists yet. It is my opinion that the training of pragmalinguists would be the first and important step to take the direction of an effective teaching of civilisation courses.

Finally, I would like to talk about the field of research which I am engaged in at present and which has a connection with the topic under consideration. It is that part of philology that is concerned with casual speech and fast speech rules. This field has been totally neglected by high school teachers who have always contented themselves with communicating the standard version and the formal ways of expression of any modern language. Thus, a teacher of German will tell his pupils to pronounce "Hast Du" as hast du, not mentioning the "allegro forms" of /hastsə/ or /hast/ Similarly, a teacher of French will teach the standard pronunciation of "je ne sais pas", and not /ʒɛ'pɑ/ or /ʃpɑ/. The silent'e' which the French Language Institutes insist on, has almost disappeared in everyday pronunciation. Nobody will care for teaching his students that "pendent" and "gendarme" are pronounced /pa'nə/, and /za'narm/ in casual speech. it is the same with English where slang pronunciaion is consciously avoided by teachers; they will, rather defend an over-distinct pronunciation that allow the use of fast speech rules (cf. "What do you want?" pronounced as /wat d'wan(t)/.

It is the pupil's fate to grow up with a highly formal conventional style which is inappropriate for the majority of the

conversations he will get engaged in. The result is that he either gets frustrated when being talked to informally by a "native speaker" or he has difficulties in understanding him and answering in the same style. It is however, true that foreigners abroad are not necessarily always addressed in an informal way. Our socio-linguistic investigations at the University of Vienna have shown that a familiarity of the partners does definitely catalyse the process of their adopting a nonchalant "allegro style".

Since modern language teachers have such a contempt for the use of fast speech rules, they tend to overstress slow-moving, dignified, and formal types of style, such as recitation, over-exact articulation in reading etc. Even if pupils occasionally get acquainted with flowing and informal style, they are never taught it systematically at secondary school. It would indeed be desirable for the whole field of linguistics to abandon this contemptuous attitude towards conversational style.

There is a connection between all these remarks and the teaching of civilisation. American philologists have provided evidence that the choice of style in conversation is mainly dependent on the actual situation of the speakers. In my investigations of the Viennese dialect I have found out 10 different styles which range from the extremely slow and artificial to the quickly-flowing, natural style. It all depends on the degree of familiarity of the partners, whether they belong to the primary group or to a peer group, whether they are social equals, what their attitude is towards colloquial style and dialect, where their conversation takes place, etc. All these are matters of research for the field

civilisation.

A suggestion for the future research and teaching of civilisation would be to find out as much as possible about these sociolinguistic aspects in the target country.

On the level of high school education the introduction of civilisation as a new and separate subject would entail a cutting down of the language training of the pupils, which would be irresponsible. There is simply not enough time for the teaching of a sufficient communicative competence in the foreign language. Thus, the aim of improving the pupil's understanding of the target country must be reached by way of communicating a civilisation that is incorporated in the language and literature part of instruction.

For this reason, the field of culture and civilisation to be institutionalised as a separate subject at university level is to be rejected; its function can only be an ancillary one.